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MAY 2, 2025 | VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 10

YOUR PURCHASE BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
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GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

GIG ECONOMY *edition*

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM

venmo

@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

from the joint desk of **GROUNDCOVER + GIG A2**

You have to hustle to live in Ann Arbor — especially if you're in the service industry, working a low-wage job, or can't do a traditional 9-to-5 because of your family situation, health issues or other circumstances.

More and more people are turning to gig work, side hustles and entrepreneurship to try to make ends meet when traditional employment isn't cutting it. This isn't just an aphorism, but a reality in our community — backed by the qualitative and quantitative evidence presented in this themed edition on the gig economy.

To afford Ann Arbor's cost of living, an adult with one child would need to make about $41 an hour, or $85,900 a year, according to MIT's living wage calculator. While Ann Arbor is one of the most affluent cities in Michigan, 23% of residents — almost 27,500 people — live in poverty.

Traditional public assistance programs can help those with the greatest needs. But food stamps, housing vouchers, disability insurance and public health insurance come with complicated eligibility criteria and restrictions on how the assistance can be used. Often, recipients are threatened with "making too much;" making a few dollars over the eligibility threshold results in hundreds of assistance dollars lost. These harsh eligibility requirements serve to trap people in poverty, instead of lifting them out of it.

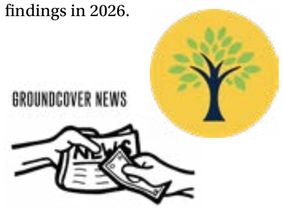
Guaranteed income offers a different approach. Guaranteed income is growing in popularity, with pilot programs popping up across the United States to test this form of cash assistance as a supplement to traditional welfare programs.

The idea of guaranteed income at its core suggests that income is a solution to poverty, that economic autonomy is a means to a better life. Because of this, Groundcover News and Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor have worked together since the start. Groundcover News is one of the few organizations locally that connects self-determined, low-income people to money.

Yes, selling and writing for Groundcover News is a job — but when it comes to flexibility and instability, working for Groundcover News offers the same benefits and challenges as other gig work. We believe entrepreneurial work inspires creativity, purpose, pride, personal growth and empowerment. We believe gig workers make Ann Arbor a better place to live.

The City of Ann Arbor is using this no-strings-attached form of cash assistance to support entrepreneurs, gig workers and self-employed workers with low incomes who live in the city. Ann Arbor's guaranteed income pilot recognizes the ways the pandemic changed people's relationship to work and the important ways that entrepreneurs and gig workers are already contributing to the local economy. Together, we're exploring what difference guaranteed income makes for these entrepreneurs and whether the idea is worth expanding.

This themed edition on the gig economy is an invitation to think about guaranteed income and gig workers and get access to local research in a accessible way. Talk with your vendor about the struggles and joys of gig work. Come to our community conversation on Thursday, May 8, 5:30 - 7 p.m. to share and learn more about what it might take to graduate this pilot into something bigger (more information on the graphic on page 3). Advocate if you want to see this program continued. Look out for the research pilot's final findings in 2026.



GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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1/6	$145.00	$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	$200.00	$265.00	5 X 6.25
1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	$650.00	$900.00	10.25 X 13

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Full Year/Twenty-four Issues: **35%** off
Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR

Pedro Campos, vendor No. 652

In one sentence, who are you? Human, druid, poet, journalist, chess player, social scientist and cosmonaut.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover? The corner of State and Liberty, outside Starbucks.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover? It's been eight months already. I identify myself with the people, the writing, the circumstance, struggling for housing as I am — the project as a whole.

What is one place in Ann Arbor that feels like your own personal sanctuary? I like going to the U-M Law School. I like the way it looks, like Hogwarts. It's quiet and I would like to go to classes there.

What's your life motto? Keep it real.

What advice would you give to your younger self? Never hold back.

What is your comfort food? Lasagna.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what would they be? Water, food, lighter.

If there was a theme song for your life, what would it be? "The Great Gig in the Sky" by Pink Floyd. See page 14!

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? Outerspace.

What is the weirdest food combo you swear by? Le Big Mac!

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County? Housing first — for real!

What's one question you wished you were asked more often? How are you feeling?

I Have A Stigma

SCOOP STEVENS
Groundcover vendor No. 638

Anonymous: You have a stigma.
I do?
Anonymous: Once you are homeless you are always homeless.
I have a home that I live in.
Anonymous: You have a mental illness.
I do?
Anonymous: Once you are homeless you are always homeless; you have a stigma.
I do not understand.
Anonymous: Stop thinking for yourself, you have a substance abuse problem.
I do?
Anonymous: Once you are homeless you are always homeless.
I have a home that I live in.
Anonymous: You are in denial; once you are homeless you are always homeless; you have a stigma.
What should I do?
Anonymous: Work more, make more, consume more, conform more, stop thinking for yourself and pay rent.
I do not have to pay rent.
Anonymous: You are in denial; once you are homeless you are always homeless; you have a stigma.
I have a stigma, you told me so.

April showers bring may flowers

ROBERTO ISLA CABALLERO
Groundcover vendor No. 347

We don't know what to sow in the fall. When the white spring storm with salty, wintery, low-temperatures comes, only the sun will protect us from the sun-flecked dark clouds. By the lake we eat fish; we don't know what to sow in the soil affected by warm winters and dry rains. We have downpours but the trees are still thirsty. On dry mornings we keep working with parched thoughts — frustrated our work counts for so little to ICE and corrupt police officers. They sell themselves like fatherlands that have no mothers, only prostitutes. As with international laws, they don't believe in oaths or promotions; they only believe in stupidity.

With a third world war this world is lost. Only the powerful will survive. The helpless will look at love's smile and the earth's hope. The seas will open their doors, and rivers full of the fortunate will rejoice with their intimate forefathers. Only the angel and its creators will see the new day rise.

No sabemos qué sembrar en otoño. Cuando vienen las blancas primaveras con invierno salados y con storms con bajas temperaturas, solo el sol nos cobija de las nubes negras con pintas soleadas. En lagos comemos pescado y en la tierra no sabemos qué sembrar con invierno acalorados y lluvias secas. Pero con árboles secos tenemos aguaceros, pero en mañanas secas y pensamientos frustrados seguimos trabajando, pero no tenemos cuenta, solo letras de ICE y policía corruptos. Y se venden como se vende pátrias que no tienen madre solo putas. Lo mismo que leyes internacionales, no creen en juramentos ni promociones, solo creen en estupideces.

Con una tercera guerra mundial este mundo está perdido. Solo el poderoso sobrevivirá. Y el desamparado mirará la sonrisa del amor y la esperanza de la tierra y los mares abrirán sus puertas y ríos llenos de afortunados gozarán de sus íntimos antepasados. Solo el ángel y sus creadores mirarán el día de ver nacido.

What difference does guaranteed income make for Ann Arbor gig workers?
Join the Community Conversation!
May 8, 5:30-7:00 pm
Scan to register
Multipurpose Room
Lower Level
Ann Arbor District Library
343 South Fifth Avenue
Ann Arbor

Building Our Solidarity Economy: Conference review

JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

CYNTHIA PRICE
Editor

On March 28, a conference was held at the University of Michigan Ginsberg Center titled "Building Our Solidarity Economy." The conference was co-organized by the Ginsberg Center and the Michigan Chapter of Resource Generation. Resource Generation is a national membership organization that organizes economically privileged young people in support of wealth redistribution and economic justice.

The conference was populated by people looking for answers. It is obvious to many that capitalism is failing. What is not obvious is what to replace it with. Anecdotally, a majority of people believe the only alternative to capitalism is socialism. This is not true; there are many ways to go about distributing resources. The Solidarity Economy conference was an exploration of what that might look like.

A "solidarity economy" is one that prioritizes human development and environmental responsibility over the acquisition of profit and wealth. Instead of valuing competition, a solidarity economy values cooperation, mutualism, equity, participatory democracy, sustainability, and pluralism. Examples of solidarity economy practices include:

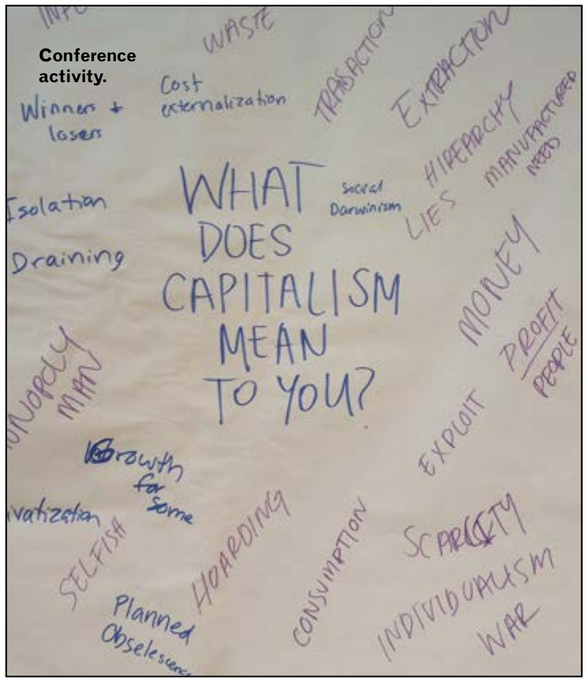
- Worker-owned cooperatives: workers own the business, share in management and decision making responsibilities and share the profits
- Community land trusts: organizations acquire property to keep it available for the community (as opposed to private ownership and real estate agents)
- Timebanks: people use hours of labor and services as currency
- Community lending practice: simply put, banks without interest
- Participatory budgeting: citizens of a region decide how to spend it's resources as opposed to a centralized service/private sector provider
- Fair trade practices.

The room was filled with everyone from wanted ecoterrorists to radicalized college students to members of the Ann Arbor / Ypsilanti communities.

Jiji, an activist from Ypsilanti, had this to say: "The conference is about solidarity economies and how they show up for different communities. Different organizations came, mostly centered around the farming economy and practices. The conference also addressed how to uplift the solidarity economy by creating communal spaces for sharing resources such as food, skill shares, community events, even shelter."

Jiji also shared about the Community Food Forest located at Leslie Park in Ann Arbor. A community food forest is a miniature forest ecosystem that contains a variety of edible plants. Volunteers take care of the plants and the forest is open to the public for food sustenance and socializing. You can learn more about it on their website: www.trueearth.org/food-forest

Jiji said there were different farmer cooperatives such as The D-town Farm run by the Detroit Black Community Food Sovereignty Network. The DBCFSN is a citizens group that works on self-reliance and food justice issues by educating the public on healthy food production and processing, and creating policy.



Conference activity.

The first workshop was titled "Solidarity Economy and You," led by Prerna (pron. Prayer-na) Agarwall. It was an introduction to the solidarity economy model and its potential for an alternative to capitalism. Prerna is a facilitator, activist and educator. They have been organizing for nearly seven years, building power through fighting gentrification and expanding community food sovereignty with Cleveland Owns. They are fiercely committed to following in the Zapatista tradition of building a world where many worlds fit.

Prerna explained that for us to build outside of capitalism we must go beyond building cooperation and community and include pushing back against the structures of domination that we see imposed and escalated onto us.

Expanding on this, Prerna explained, "The work I do involves the incubation and development of cooperatives. It's really important for me to remind people that although practices of collectivity and cooperation do feel radical, unless it is tied into material class struggle, there's nothing that enables the end of capitalism. What that means is making sure our cooperatives are in alignment with global class struggles. Remember it's not just about sharing dry goods or sharing food, it is more about fighting against domination. This includes people who are most vulnerable and oftentimes don't have the capacity to come and enter spaces like this."

Other workshops that were held included: Transformative Fundraising: How to build community and shift power while raising money; Navigating Conflict in Organizing and Coalition Building; and Solidarity Economy Here and Now: Practices from the Great Lakes Region.

"Reclaiming and Resourcing our Collective Future" was the final session of the day. The panel presentation accompanied an announcement that Resource Generation Michigan has adopted the organization MI Rent Is Too Damn High as their campaign partner. This will help Rent Is Too Damn High to reach tenants across the state.

MI Rent Is Too Damn High describes itself as "a statewide coalition of tenant unions, housing justice groups, and allied organizations." Their inaugural event was the September 5, 2023, Rent Is Too Damn High demonstration, which brought out 350 tenants from across the state to the Capitol in Lansing. Their focus now has moved from legislative advocacy to fostering strength in existing tenant unions and localized tenant assemblies, and developing new unions and assemblies.

The Coalition Coordinator, Will Lawrence, served on the panel and his presentation was incisive, with a clear and overarching view of the failings of a system that makes obtaining housing dependent on being able to pay for it.

Lawrence said in an interview, "I thought the conference went very well. There were a lot of terrific presenters and panelists with a great diversity of projects, for example, land banks, eco-villages, farming and agriculture projects and a lot of mutual aid and community support organizations."

Lawrence commented about Resource Generation's commitment to The Rent Is Too Damn High, "We're very honored to have our work recognized, and we're looking forward to organizing tenants around the state."

The remaining panelists were Jamila Martin of Movement Voter Project, which makes connections between funders and innovative projects through many initiatives, and Dr. Ashley Glassburn of the Miami Nation of Indiana Honor Fund. All three panelists talked about the "redistribution of wealth" inherent in wealthy funders willing to support initiatives that address issues in less mainstream ways.

Dr. Glassburn added a lot of interesting items to the discussion during the question and answer period. For example, on the topic of homeless people she said, to applause, that it was counterintuitive to seek money to build a homeless shelter when instead it could be used for programs to prevent the need for shelter space.

Dr. Glassburn also pointed out something unusual about the Black Panther Party chapters in Milwaukee and Chicago. In Milwaukee, they concentrated on distributing food and making sure people were getting fed. The Panthers in Chicago were armed

see **SOLIDARITY** next page ➡

The role of local businesses in supporting community well-being

KOBE CLARK
U-M student contributor

Local businesses are the backbone of Ann Arbor's economy, accounting for nearly 50% of its economic activity and significantly contributing to the city's cultural and financial stability. Whether it's independent bookstores, small coffee shops or family-owned restaurants, these businesses provide jobs, support local causes and promote sustainability. Even as Ann Arbor continues to grow, small businesses remain a key part of the community.

Local businesses in Ann Arbor are not only the drivers of economic growth, but also cultural anchors and environmental stewards that enhance community well-being in diverse and meaningful ways. Despite facing challenges such as rising costs and corporate competition, these businesses remain essential to the city's success, making it crucial for residents to support them in order to preserve Ann Arbor's unique character and economic resilience.

Boosting the economy

Unlike big corporations that send their profits elsewhere, small businesses help keep money within the community. These businesses employ thousands of Ann Arbor residents in different industries such as retail, restaurants, tech and healthcare. Many also offer internships and entry-level jobs that give young people a chance to gain work experience.

Spending money at small businesses can also help fund important community programs, since local stores often give back through donations and sponsorships. A great example is Zingerman's, which started as a small deli and grew into a well-known business. Even with its success, Zingerman's remains locally owned and continues to buy ingredients from Michigan farms while supporting charities in the area.

Another major contributor to small businesses is the University of Michigan community. With thousands of students, professors and visitors in town, these businesses benefit from all the local shopping, dining and entertainment.

Bringing the community together

Beyond money, small businesses help make Ann Arbor feel like home by supporting local events and causes. Many donate a portion of their profits to nonprofits or sponsor programs that fight hunger, homelessness, and education gaps.

For example, Literati Bookstore is more than just a bookstore, it's a place where people gather for author talks, poetry readings, and literacy programs. Businesses like this create a sense of belonging and make Ann Arbor feel like a true community, where people connect, share ideas and celebrate local culture. Local businesses also strengthen neighborhood connections by sponsoring festivals and partnering with community groups. The Downtown Ann Arbor Partnership works with businesses to organize events that bring people downtown and boost the local economy.

Helping the environment and public health

Many Ann Arbor businesses care about sustainability and public health. They focus on eco-friendly practices, like using local ingredients, cutting down on waste and offering environmentally friendly products.

The Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge helps businesses reduce their carbon footprint while also saving money and promoting sustainability. Many restaurants in the area also focus on organic and plant-based options, making it easier for residents to eat well.

Pony Bush at Sweetwaters Cafe. Vendors love to sell outside of local businesses!

The challenges local businesses face

Even though local businesses help Ann Arbor in so many ways, they also deal with major challenges. Large chain stores and online shopping make it harder for small businesses to compete, sometimes leading to closures.

One of the biggest issues is the high cost of retail space in Ann Arbor, especially downtown and Kerrytown. Many small businesses struggle to afford their space, forcing some to move or shut down. Programs like Small Business Saturday encourage people to shop locally and support independent stores. The city also offers grants and tax breaks to help small businesses stay open.

By choosing to shop at small businesses, residents can help keep Ann Arbor's economy strong and its neighborhoods connected. As one business owner put it, "When you shop at a small business, you are not just buying a product. You are investing in your own community." Supporting local businesses isn't just about convenience. It's about making sure Ann Arbor stays a great place to live for years to come.

➡ **SOLIDARITY** from last page

militants and were concentrating on that aspect of the revolution. But the FBI had three times as many infiltration agents in Milwaukee as they did in Chicago. Apparently they considered the threat of organizing for community support more dangerous than organizing an armed conflict.

After the panel, two people led the conference closing. One of the people asked for meditative silence then asked a few questions about being a giver or receiver. She encouraged people to close their eyes for a slow, meditative reflection, with a focus on envisioning land redistribution. Then the other person read a poem, which was a cross between traditional and Spoken Word poetry, concerning stolen lands and the attitudes of indigenous people toward land and non-ownership. It was an impressive and touching way to end the conference.

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YDL-Michigan back open!
YDL's downtown branch (229 W. Michigan Ave.) has reopened as of April 14. We hope you have the chance to see it in person and take in all of the new additions. There are three new private study rooms, a revamped children's area downstairs, and a tech lounge with a street view. Visit ypsilibrary.org/botb to read more about the long journey back.

FEATURED EVENT
SPRING ALL AGES CLOTHING SWAP
Saturday | May 24 | 3-5pm
YDL-Michigan

Join us in the downtown library plaza for a Spring All Ages Clothing Swap to find something new and connect with others in our community. All ages and sizes are encouraged to attend. Registration is not required but is encouraged for those bringing clothing. Leftover clothing will be donated to a local thrift shop. Questions? Contact Shoshanna (shoshanna@ypsilibrary.org) or Ellen (esteves@ypsilibrary.org).

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

Guaranteed income means empowerment

A GRATEFUL COMMUNITY MEMBER
GIG A2 participant

I have a disabled child who has complex support needs that have required my care for the majority of the last decade. The full-time work I did prior to having children is no longer an option, as it does not afford me the flexibility I need. I pivoted to part-time gig work which fluctuates in frequency, resulting in an unpredictable source of income. We rely primarily on my partner's income, which is still not enough for us to get by even though he works a full time job.

When I first heard about earning a spot to participate in the GIGA2 pilot program, it honestly sounded too good to be true. I was worried it was a mean scam for the first few weeks. Everyone I interacted with was (and continues to be) so respectful, reassuring and transparent, and after I researched the program I gradually started to believe this was real. The more I learn about what the researchers of this project are seeking to do, the more I respect this endeavor and personally feel how positively impactful these no-strings-attached monthly stipends are for my family.

A practice that is remarkably unique about the model of this pilot program is how empowering and affirming it feels to participate. Generally, it can feel embarrassing to ask for help or need support, but the researchers of this project exude respect and have designed this pilot in such a way that I, as a participant, feel my dignity is very much preserved.

Another important piece I would like to highlight is that the money I am receiving through this program is genuinely helping in numerous ways. I remember reading in the GIGA2 literature that they believe recipients will know the best ways to spend the money they receive, and they even stipulated that using it for wellness and self-care purposes — or anything at all — is valid and legitimate. Here are some ways the money has been helpful for our family: covering the ever-rising cost of groceries, copays for specialist appointments for my child, new glasses, home organization, feeling okay to order easier meals from time to time.

This money has given me more peace of mind and helps alleviate my stress in numerous ways including when my gig work is cancelled for reasons outside of my control.

Receiving these monthly stipends over the course of the past year has helped me heal from my own burnout and improve my mental health. I recently applied and was admitted into a degree program and I am now on the path to earning a degree in which I will be able to advocate for people with mental health challenges and disabilities. It is difficult to put into words the relief and boost this GIGA2 project is having on me personally, and for my family. I would like to let potential funders or supporters of this and similar programs know that I am not taking this as a free handout. Rather, it is providing crucial scaffolding for me to get out of a difficult spot and onto more stable ground. I am using this financial support to cover essential bills, and also to build toward a new career that will allow me to better balance the needs of my child as well as serving and advocating for others in our greater community. I will continue to pay this forward, and I am beyond grateful.

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Stability for my family and me

ANONYMOUS
GIG A2 participant

The guaranteed income program has been a lifeline for me. Without it, I am uncertain how I would have survived. As a single mother with a disability, I have faced significant challenges in finding stable, part-time work. Despite my best effort, the demands of caring for my children and managing my health have made it difficult to secure consistent employment. With no family in the area to rely on, the responsibility of caregiving rests solely on my shoulders. At one point, rising rental prices nearly forced us into homelessness, and it was only through the kindness of strangers that I was able to secure stable housing. The financial support provided by the guaranteed income program has been a crucial safety net, helping me weather the increasing cost of living and the economic uncertainty that has become all too common.

The program has greatly reduced my financial stress by providing a steady month payment. Currently I work in various gig and project-based roles. These roles offer me the flexibility I need to care for my children and manage my disability. However, the nature of gig work means that it is often unreliable and inconsistent, making it a source of constant anxiety, especially as prices continue to rise and other social safety nets are being removed.

Thanks to the guaranteed income, I have been able to pay all of my bills on time, which has alleviated a significant amount of worry. This financial security has also given me the time and space to search for more permanent employment opportunities. Despite my diverse skill set, I often struggle to get past the Applicant Tracking Systems used by many employers, which makes it harder to find stable work.

Additionally, out of pocket medical and dental expenses have been a significant burden. One of my children required dental work that was not covered by insurance. The total cost was over $3,000, an amount that would have been impossible for us to cover without the help of the guaranteed income program. This is just one example of unexpected financial burdens that often arise, and having the support of guaranteed payments made it possible for me to manage such expenses.

The stability provided by this program has not only been essential for me, but it has also benefited my children. Because I have been able to focus on providing quality parenting, they are emotionally stable, mature and reliable young people. My oldest daughter, in particular, is a caring and intelligent individual who is determined to make a difference in this world. She will be starting college in the fall, driven to succeed and help others, and I have no doubt that she will do great things. My younger child has also shown remarkable character. He volunteers at Food Gatherers, helps classmates with their homework at school, and even retired neighbors call him when they need some help with something they cannot physically do. Both of my children are already making a positive impact in their communities and have learned the important lesson of community and helping others.

In light of these experiences, I believe that Ann Arbor should continue its guaranteed income pilot program. The financial support it provides has been crucial in helping people like me navigate the challenges of living with a disability, raising children on my own, and managing the instability of gig work. The benefits of guaranteed income far outweigh the potential drawbacks, and it is a step toward building a more secure and equitable future for individuals facing similar challenges.

How the Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor program has impacted my life

HENRY
GIG A2 participant

The Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor program has been a great blessing in my life. I am most thankful for how it has relieved the stress from worrying about so many different money issues. This stress contributes to depression and the mindset of "what is the use of even trying?" Knowing help is coming every month has produced a new-found sense of hopefulness.

When I first started receiving the income, I was a DoorDash driver trying to make ends meet. I used my first two payments to get some badly-needed brake work done on my car. Later I was able to use the income to buy some presentable clothing, and I was able to then secure additional income through a part-time temporary job that lasted almost a year.

I had previously written three books which I sell on Amazon.com. I've been able to use some of the guaranteed income to advertise my books and also to send out review copies. As a result I have had an increase in book sales. I have also used the stipend to buy shipping supplies for my small eBay.com store. This helps me generate additional income.

The greatest benefit has just been knowing I'll have that money every month to cover food and housing expenses. The relief from the constant day-to-day thinking about "where is the money going to come from?" is hard to put into words. It frees up my mind for more creative thinking, and as a result I've been able to resume my daily blogging. I can blog to advertise my books, and I am hoping to see another increase in book sales as a result.

I hope the University of Michigan is able to publicize far and wide the benefits of this program and that it inspires other similar initiatives. I have no doubt there are millions in America who could similarly benefit. If you are not a low income person, it might be hard to understand how an extra $500 per month can make such a huge difference. But imagine getting into your car every day for your delivery job and hoping your brakes hold out, or not having $150 to get a broken tooth pulled.

Just imagine all the hours people all over the world spend worrying about monetary issues, time that could be put to more creative and beneficial uses. That's what I am most thankful for thanks to the Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor program: peace of mind and freedom to engage in meaningful activities.

I know there are some people in America who automatically resist any sort of program that helps poor people; they believe it "pampers and spoils" people, or makes them less likely to work. Nothing could be further from the truth. Easing financial pressure helped ease my stress and depression levels, giving me more motivation to continue my artistic projects and find extra work through a temp job. I don't have a single negative thing to say about the program, and I hope it continues and expands.

"Ms. Artist" appreciates validation and support

MS. ARTIST
GIG A2 participant

I am a highly-educated professional who made the sacrifice to leave an academic career to go into the arts. Sickness that requires hospitalization taught me that life is too short not to go for what you really love.

I had been on a career fast-track and many of my peers and classmates were all at the top of their game: doctors, professors at top universities, government officials, corporate and legal bigwigs, and a few people who are even household names. I could have been one of them as well, but it would not have been the same as doing what I had truly wanted to do since I was a little girl. If you are an artist or entrepreneur, you are driven by a deep, intrinsic motivation that says you can't do anything else.

Leaving my very promising financial path was probably the hardest decision I ever made. When I woke up in the morning, I would feel frightened about my future, and yet somehow so free. There were no instruction manuals as to how to accomplish my dreams, and of course there was the question of steady income.

I didn't know any other peers or classmates at that point who had taken such a bold move, and my parents had had very stable jobs. I myself craved that kind of job stability, but I knew that there was no other choice than to go into the arts after years of doing things and working in fields that were good and noble but so wrong for me. I had heard of people being able to make a living as artists in various places in Europe — for example, singers who are offered civil service contracts in Germany — and saw how there was the phenomenon of working artists in New York, since there were many opportunities and funding for all disciplines of the arts.

I had expected my career path to be difficult due to the artistic challenges: figuring out how to express what is in your mind and heart and soul, spending endless hours on disciplined work (because you cannot wait for the muse to come; the work itself is the muse!), self-doubt, reworking things until you get it just right. That is indeed true, but the harder part is the business side of things. I had never expected the constant hustle, but that is what being an artist requires.

I have learned that even if you do steady work, you do not receive steady income. You invest more in applications to showcase your work than you receive in pay. You invest more energy in doing your work and putting it out there than you get back. Worst of all, you have very little externally to show for all the effort and work you do. I'm lucky enough to get positive feedback from the uppermost echelons in my field, which motivates me and shows that I am on the right track. Sadly, that does not always translate to opportunities to show my work or get hired.

This is why a program like GIG A2 is so vital, because a minimum of guaranteed income helps keep those of us in the arts or entrepreneurship going. We need stability, the assurance from the outside world that what we do is necessary, the validation that we are calculated risk-takers who are doing something unlike anyone else. The arts are not valued on a large scale in the United States and are generally relegated to the private sector and the wealthy. Arts organizations around the country are constantly seeking funds from donors, and that is exactly what also happens on a smaller scale for artists like me. As we all know, funding is sadly being slashed everywhere; that is why it is vital for local governments or regions to step in to help.

One of the most common misconceptions people have about the arts is that it is hard because it is "subjective." However, I would argue that any workplace is subjective — even a vital IT worker can be dismissed if the boss doesn't like them.

I would say this: there is a degree of subjectivity once you reach a certain threshold of mastery in your artistic field. That is, others may really appreciate your work and recognize your talents, but it is not the right fit for what they are seeking. As an artist or entrepreneur, you wait and work and hope for luck, because that is what you need once you have a certain level of talent and mastery.

Another common misconception is that artists are "flaky," working whenever they feel like it, financially irresponsible, and just not putting their work out there. Anyone who is trying to make a career in the arts will tell you this is completely wrong. A wise artist needs to know where every last penny goes, how to manage money, and how to be strategic about the next steps.

I urge the city of Ann Arbor, and other cities elsewhere, to continue these guaranteed income programs to assist us who are forging our own paths. There is so much uncertainty until we get the lucky breaks that we so deserve; knowing the city supports us gives us some reassurance of stability.

Across the country, largely with the advent of the pandemic, cities have been running pilot programs for guaranteed income. I could cite data from a number of studies conducted around the world that show increases in many factors, leading to greater well-being: financial, mental, physical, etc. Naturally, with the state of our economy now, $528 a month is indeed a boon, but it doesn't offset living costs which are high in a city like Ann Arbor. This is no reason to discontinue the program, however, as I'm sure every recipient of the GIG A2 program would agree. What we truly need is structural economic justice to help everyone in society.

I am grateful to the city of Ann Arbor and the researchers at the University of Michigan who have developed this pilot program, and I am grateful for the chance to share my experiences with you.

Guaranteed income meets the Ann Arbor hustle

What is Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor?

Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor, known as GIG A2, is a pilot program that provides monthly guaranteed income payments of $528 to 100 entrepreneurs, gig workers, and self-employed workers with low incomes who live in Ann Arbor. The monthly payments began in January 2024 and will end in December 2025.

GIG A2 is unique compared to other guaranteed income programs for its focus on entrepreneurs and gig workers, with the goal of seeing whether the monthly payments allow people to grow their businesses or take a step back from their side hustles and focus on other priorities.

All GIG A2 participants take surveys throughout the pilot program and some participants also complete in-depth interviews about what difference the money makes for them and their overall well-being. This research will inform future discussions about expanding guaranteed income in Washtenaw County and across the country.

GIG A2 is funded with $1.6 million of the City of Ann Arbor's federal American Rescue Plan Act money plus additional funds from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation. Ann Arbor city council voted in June 2023 to move forward with the version of the pilot program proposed by Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan. U-M designed and implemented the program and is now evaluating its impact. Several partner organizations in the Ann Arbor area advised on the design and launch of GIG A2.

Who is part of the guaranteed income pilot?

One hundred people who met the eligibility criteria were randomly selected to receive the $528 monthly payments. Another 100 people who met the eligibility criteria were randomly selected to participate in the research study without receiving the guaranteed income payments. They receive small monthly stipends and play a critical role in making the research possible.

Figure 1: Race of GIG A2 Participants and Ann Arbor Residents

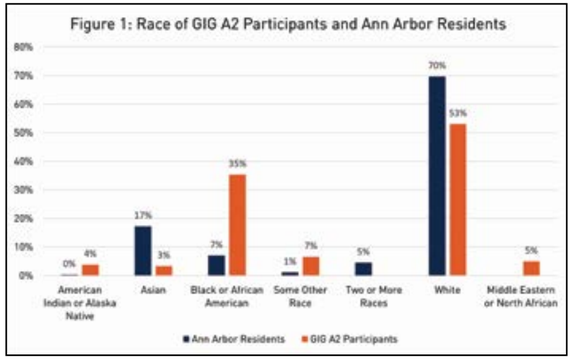
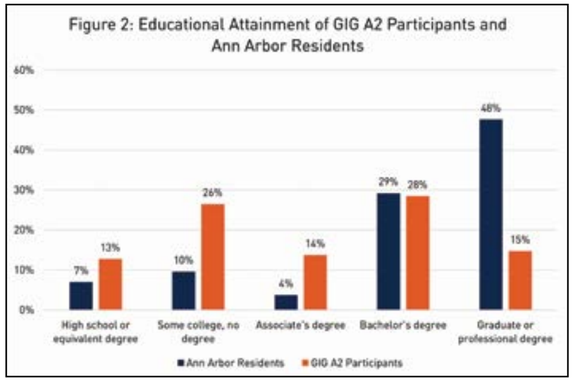


Figure 2: Educational Attainment of GIG A2 Participants and Ann Arbor Residents



The data include GIG A2 participants who are 25 and older in order to match how the Census reports the educational attainment of all Ann Arbor residents.

Figure 3: GIG A2 Participants' Entrepreneurship Activity, by Type

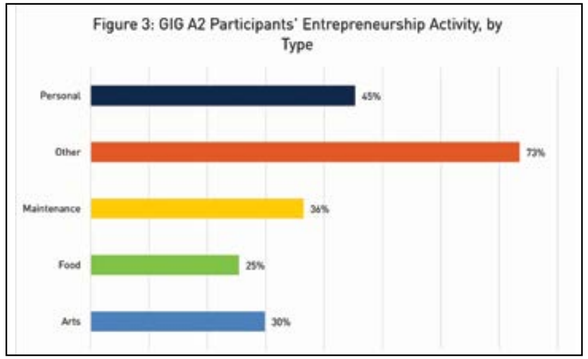
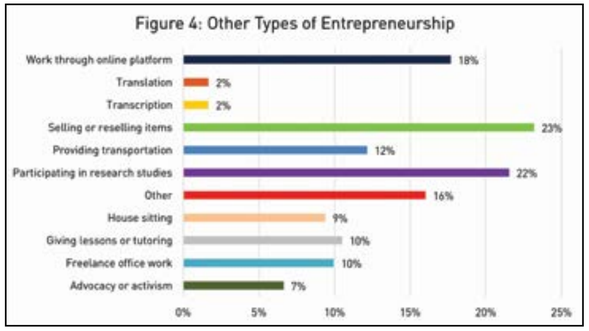


Figure 4: Other Types of Entrepreneurship



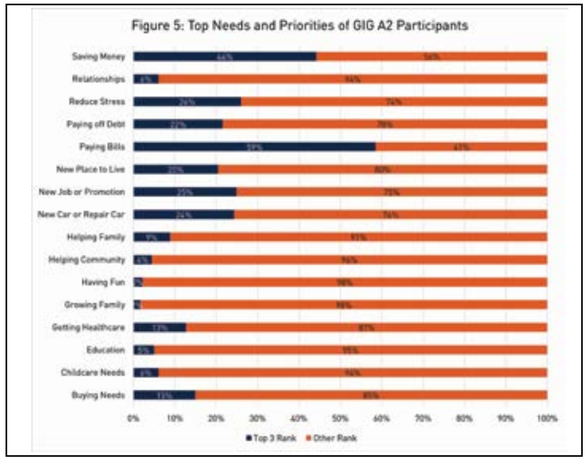
What type of work do GIG A2 participants do?

Entrepreneurship can mean many different things. GIG A2 includes people who have side hustles, are trying to start a business, who have a business going, or are gig workers. The charts above show the type of work GIG A2 participants do.

How are people using the money so far?

GIG A2 participants recently completed a survey about how they have used the guaranteed income payments in the first year of the pilot program. The U-M research team also has interviewed some participants to learn more about what difference the money makes for them and their overall well-being. This chart shows participants' top needs and priorities for the guaranteed income payments at the start of the pilot program. *Continued on page 10.*

Figure 5: Top Needs and Priorities of GIG A2 Participants



COMMUTER CHALLENGE 2025

PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUTER CHALLENGE

MAY 1–31, 2025

The Commuter Challenge encourages community members to choose sustainable transportation for travel to and from work. Individuals and workplaces can win prizes for joining the challenge!

PRIZES INCLUDE:

- Treats from Washtenaw Dairy
- Workplace celebrations catered by Sweetgreen
- Special VIP rewards for workplace challenge captains
- More than a dozen gift cards to local businesses!

Sign up at **win.getDowntown.org**

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How are people using the money so far? Continued from pg. 8

The researchers' interviews with participants show that the $528 a month has provided a helpful financial cushion, allowing participants to worry a little bit less about having the money for their monthly bills. However, many participants realized that the funds could be used to expand or grow their entrepreneurial work.

"I'm thinking, yes, this money had to go for bills," one participant shared. "But, I'm thinking, if I make this work in the right way, I won't have to worry about that."

Another participant described how the extra funding allowed her to practice money management and finance prioritization.

"I'm really trying to use [the $528] towards my business. I'm trying to discipline myself," the person said. "Like, no, we don't have this extra money just to go spend, it's to spend on the entrepreneurial stuff that you want to do, your business."

One participant shared that she is now able to save up for the food truck she dreamed of.

"I want a food truck. It's going to be called 'Because Sandwiches,'" she shared enthusiastically.

Prior to receiving the $528 a month, most of her money went to basic necessities. While that still happens on occasion, "having access to GIG A2 has allowed me to actually seek out ways to advance my business goal," she told the interviewer.

What's next?

The research team is analyzing data from the survey and in-depth interviews and will share those findings later this year. GIG A2 participants will complete a final survey when the pilot ends. The research team is trying to see whether the monthly guaranteed income payments:

1. Improve people's health through increased housing, food and transportation security, improvements in physical and mental health and access to care, and improvements in access and quality of child care;
2. Help small businesses and entrepreneurs stabilize and/or grow their businesses; and
3. Allow entrepreneurs the time and resources to focus on their business.

Only with the best possible research can people make a strong argument to policymakers about expanding guaranteed income in the future. GIG A2 is an important contribution to the broader guaranteed income movement.

The GIG A2 team would like to thank the following partners and advisors for their support in developing and administering the pilot program:

Steady
Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
EC Washtenaw Community College
GROUNDCOVER NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP
EXPRESS YOUR YES FOUNDATION
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City of Ann Arbor Michigan

WHAT DOES GUARANTEED INCOME MEAN TO YOU?

"[It] definitely helps you expand where you're going to sell, what you're going to sell."

"It allows me to take care of my monthly bills."

"This extra money to me is not really extra, but it was able to start this business that's going to bring that residual income."

"I can use that to ... pay off my debts and work towards starting my business."

"It felt like this is a giant relief. Because without that, what would I have done in the last couple months without a job?"

"It is the only reason why I'm able to pay my rent right now ... I'd be out of money without that."

"I'm working on new things in my life as far as recovery and sobriety and boundaries ... So now I work at this little car wash up the street, and it's not bad ... but it's considerably less money. So with GIG A2, I have been able to pay my rent recently."

Quotes from GIG A2 participants in research interviews

Entrepreneurship can be sweet

MARISOL
GIG A2 participant

Mi nombre es Marisol y les voy a contar sobre mi emprendimiento en el mundo de la repostería. Todo comenzó con el apoyo del programa de ingreso garantizado en Ann Arbor.

¿Alguna vez has probado algo tan rico que quieres seguir comiendo y no parar? Bueno, eso es exactamente lo que encontrarás en mis postres como: pasteles, dulces shot y chocolates. Aquí todo es hecho a mano con mucho amor y una bonita energía. Hago unos deliciosos postres con ingredientes frescos y de alta calidad, los postres están decorados con hermosos colores, divertidos diseños y sabores que los enamoran. Los pasteles son hechos de diferentes sabores como vainilla, chocolate relleno de dulce de leche, tres leches, limón, red velvet, pay de limon, Cheesecake y otros sabores. También hago dulces shot, son pequeños postres individuales que se sirven en copas o vasos. Son ideales para fiestas y eventos, ya que permite disfrutar de postres sin necesidad de comer porciones grandes. Las opciones más populares son el pay de limón, mousse de parchita, tres leches y galleta oreo — sin olvidar los deliciosos chocolates y paletas de chocolate rellenas de sabores irresistibles, donde el sabor a dulce de leche, parchita, lico, leche condensada, coco y frutos rojos.... Son los protagonistas principales. También hago hermosos arreglos de flores y fresas cubiertas de chocolate, ideales para regalos. Definitivamente este ha sido un viaje al mundo de la repostería muy fascinante.

Es importante resaltar que mi emprendimiento en la repostería en Ann Arbor ha sido un desafío en cuanto a la necesidad de adaptación, a la tendencias, a las culturas, competencia y precios ; sin embargo ha sido una forma de expresar mi cultura y un medio para preservar tradiciones y recetas familiares en medio de circunstancias difíciles.

Pienso que Ann Arbor debería continuar con este programa piloto de ingresos garantizados, porque el emprendimiento desempeña un papel vital en el impulso del crecimiento económico y la creación de empleo. Es el motor que impulsa la innovación, genera nuevas empresas y aporta nuevos productos y servicios al mercado. Crear y dirigir una empresa puede ser todo un reto. Los emprendedores suelen tener dificultades para acceder a la financiación, sortear normativas complejas y adquirir las capacidades y los conocimientos necesarios; por tal motivo los ínsito a continuar con este maravilloso programa que me ha ayudado tanto en mi emprendimiento.

Aprovecho la oportunidad para agradecerles por permitirme ser parte del Programa Piloto de Ingreso Garantizado, ustedes han sido el motor de mi emprendimiento, sin su ayuno no hubiese sido posible. Gracias, gracias y los felicito por tan hermosa labor, éxitos y bendiciones.

English translation:

My name is Marisol, and I'm going to tell you about my pastry venture. It all started with support from the Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor Program.

Have you ever tasted something so delicious that you want to keep eating it? Well, that's exactly what you'll find in my desserts: cakes, shot candies and chocolates. At my candy shop, everything is handmade with lots of love and a beautiful energy. I make delicious desserts with fresh, high-quality ingredients. The desserts are decorated with beautiful colors, fun designs, and flavors that you'll fall in love with. The cakes come in different flavors such as vanilla, chocolate filled with dulce de leche, tres leches, lemon, red velvet, lemon pie, cheesecake and other flavors.

I also make shot candies, which are small individual desserts served in glasses or cups. They are ideal for parties and events, as they allow you to enjoy desserts without having to eat large portions. The most popular options are lemon pie, passion fruit mousse, tres leches and Oreo cookies — not to mention the delicious chocolates and chocolate lollipops filled with irresistible flavors where dulce de leche, passion fruit, liqueur, condensed milk, coconut, and red berries are the stars. I also make beautiful flower arrangements and chocolate-covered strawberries, which are ideal for gifts. This has definitely been a fascinating journey into the world of baking.

It's important to highlight that my baking venture in Ann Arbor has been a challenge in terms of adapting to trends, cultures, competition and prices; however, it has been a way to express my culture and a means to preserve my family traditions and recipes amidst difficult circumstances.

I think Ann Arbor should continue this guaranteed income pilot program because entrepreneurship plays a vital role in driving economic growth and job creation. It's the engine that fuels innovation, creates new businesses and brings new products and services into the market. Starting and running a business can be challenging. Entrepreneurs often struggle with accessing financing, navigating complex regulations and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge; that's why I urge them to continue this wonderful program that has helped me so much in my entrepreneurship.

I take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to be part of the Guaranteed Income Pilot Program. You have been the driving force behind my venture; without your support, it would not have been possible. Thank you, thank you, and I congratulate you on such wonderful work, success and blessings.

Guaranteed income improved my standard of living

JOE WOODS
Groundcover vendor No. 103

One year ago I was 1 of 100 people selected to participate in a pilot program called the Ann Arbor Guaranteed Income to Grow Ann Arbor. The program is geared to help low-income entrepreneurs and self-employed people in the city of Ann Arbor have a guaranteed income of $500 a month for two years, which can be used to generate revenue in the City of Ann Arbor by spending money in the community and helping low-income entrepreneurs and self-employed people make ends meet. We can use the money for whatever we want or save it and don't have to pay it back.

Although up to this point I haven't been able to save any of the money, my standard of living has improved a bit. I've been able to pay my rent and bills without really having to stress about it; was able to have money to move into a bigger place without getting help from organizations; have money to take my dog to the veterinarian for routine checkups, do more stuff with my fiance, shop, and be able to help my mom.

For the first time as an adult I actually celebrated Christmas last year, buying and decorating a Christmas tree, decorating the house, and getting presents to put under the tree for my fiance, my dog and myself. It felt really good to have extra money around the holidays when most people are stressing out about money.

This program allowed me to accomplish something I'm very proud of: I was able to surprise my mother on her birthday last April, go to California and be her birthday present and visit with her for a week. I had enough money to do and buy anything that she wanted while I was there. Most importantly, I wasn't worried about the bills when I got home.

Saying all of that, I did not lose perspective on the main goal that I made for myself if I was selected. That was to be able to have residual capital and use it as an ace in the hole if opportunity arises and get product to sell. I may have the opportunity to rent retail space for my T-Shirt company Joe's T-Shirts and having this monthly income is a great jump start. So I highly recommend and appreciate it if they're able to keep it going — keep my name on the list!

A research perspective: Poverty Solutions on GIGA2

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

Groundcover News asked the principal investigators of the project, Kristin Seefeldt, Rebeccah Sokol and William Lopez for a situation report.

Kristin Seefeldt, lead researcher, is an Associate Professor at the U-M Schools of Social Work and Public Policy.

GCN: What are you observing from the data thus far? What do you find surprising?

Kristen Seefeldt: One notable finding is that the participants in the pilot have fairly high levels of education when compared to participants in guaranteed income pilots elsewhere in the country. This isn't surprising to me, since we are a college town with highly educated residents, but often researchers will talk about higher education as a pathway to achieving upward mobility. While that might be the case on average, people aren't "averages." And in a place like Ann Arbor with a very high cost of living, having an Associate's or Bachelor's degree may not help everyone be economically stable.

GCN: Why are you studying this particular topic out of all the other potential programs focused on improving quality of life outcomes?

KS: One thing that is really unique about guaranteed income programs is that recipients decide for themselves how they want to use the money. No one is saying that the money only can be used for rent, or for food, or any other specific purpose and nothing else. The flexibility, I think, acknowledges that people know best what they need and are fully able to make decisions about their lives. Additionally, there isn't any paperwork or requirements that people need to do in order to continue receiving the money during the pilot. This can improve people's quality of life through providing autonomy and eliminating the need to report to a public assistance system.

GCN: Why do you think Ann Arbor is piloting this now?

KS: There's been growing interest in guaranteed income as a way to provide people with a stable, reliable income that doesn't have the stigma of "welfare" associated with it. Several foundations became interested in funding guaranteed income pilots, and all of a sudden pilots were cropping up around the country, in part driven by a coalition of mayors who wanted to bring guaranteed income pilots to their communities. Ann Arbor, like many cities and counties, received significant funding as part of the COVID-19 recovery, and the City decided to use some of those funds for a guaranteed income pilot.

GCN: Why is it important to popularize these findings through Groundcover News and community events and what is the potential impact?

KS: Groundcover News vendors are entrepreneurs, just like the people who are in the GIG A2 pilot. It seemed logical to partner with Groundcover News to get the word out about how the program is going and raise awareness both with readers and vendors themselves! In terms of community events, in some cases, people may have concerns about guaranteed income. They might worry that people "waste" the money or make unwise spending choices. That's why in the U.S. we have so many programs that are "in-kind," meaning we won't provide cash directly but instead will give rental assistance or a debit card that can only be used for food. By having events, the community can hear directly from participants and see the data on how the money is being used. This might lead some people to re-think their assumptions.

GCN: What stigma do you observe surrounding cash assistance?

KS: The first thing I'll say is that there is so much stigma and resistance to providing cash assistance in the U.S. that we've all but eliminated the one federal program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), that provides cash. Even with federal programs like food stamps, we see scrutiny of purchases, as evidenced by the discussions that are happening right now about not allowing food stamps to be used for soda or other items deemed "unhealthy." What this means is that we're using policy to micro-manage the decisions and limit the choices of people who have lower incomes, in a way that we do not do to those with higher incomes. This can just feed into harmful and untrue stereotypes of people with low incomes as not being trustworthy.

GCN: How would you introduce yourself to our readers?

Rebeccah Sokol: I work at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, where I teach and research how access to resources — including income, housing and social support

Rebeccah Sokol is an Assistant Professor at the U-M School of Social Work.

— influences the health and safety of families and communities.

GCN: What brought you to social work and what is your background as an activist?

RS: My training is in public health, and I now work in the School of Social Work. Blending these two disciplines has shaped my professional focus. A public health approach guides me to consider some of the largest threats to family and community safety, and how insufficient economic or social resources can cause these problems. But it is the social work perspective that encourages me to listen to and work alongside communities to identify and evaluate solutions that make our communities healthier and safer.

GCN: What made this project stand out to you?

RS: Guaranteed income programs offer an opportunity to address some of the fundamental causes of poor health. We have decades worth of research that shows us that poor Americans have worse health than wealthy Americans. Providing cash assistance to individuals with insufficient living wages is one strategy to provide people with the resources they need to attain their optimal health and well-being.

An exciting thing about GIG A2, in particular, is how it celebrates the strengths of recipients. As entrepreneurs and gig workers, GIG A2 recipients are assets to Ann Arbor and the surrounding area. Investing in them means investing in our community.

GCN: How do you see the pilot helping in the long run?

RS: Guaranteed income and direct cash assistance programs are helping change the narrative around public assistance programs towards one that honors the dignity of all individuals and communities. GIG A2 is one of many pilot programs across the United States and the world. Across these programs, recipients are gaining the autonomy to use funds as they see fit, which they largely spend to meet basic needs, pay bills and better their circumstances through things like education or improved housing.

GCN: Are there key issues or takeaways you want Groundcover News readers to know?

RS: Understanding if and how GIG A2 improves earnings, quality of life and safety is key to helping our elected officials make decisions about how and where to allocate finite resources. Our team is using a randomized controlled trial to help gain these answers, meaning that we are gathering data from both individuals who are receiving a monthly guaranteed income payment and individuals in a research group who are not receiving the payments. I want to extend my wholehearted appreciation to everyone who has completed these questionnaires. Through sharing their thoughts and experiences, we can learn so much from them to hopefully improve the health and well-being for our community and beyond.

GCN: What are you observing from the data thus far?

RS: Many of our baseline findings align with what other guaranteed income programs have found across the United States. We are now collecting data to learn how recipients have spent these funds during the first year of the program.

GCN: Why do you think Ann Arbor is piloting this now?

RS: In Ann Arbor, funding for the guaranteed income payments comes from the City of Ann Arbor's American Rescue Plan Act funds and from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation. The City had polled residents in 2022 to identify how to use ARPA funds to best serve the community, and one of the projects endorsed by community members included a guaranteed income program.

GCN: What are you observing from the data thus far? What do you find surprising?

William Lopez: The data show people are using money to get

see **RESEARCH** page 14 ➡

William Lopez is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the U-M School of Public Health.

Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

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The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

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- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
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- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
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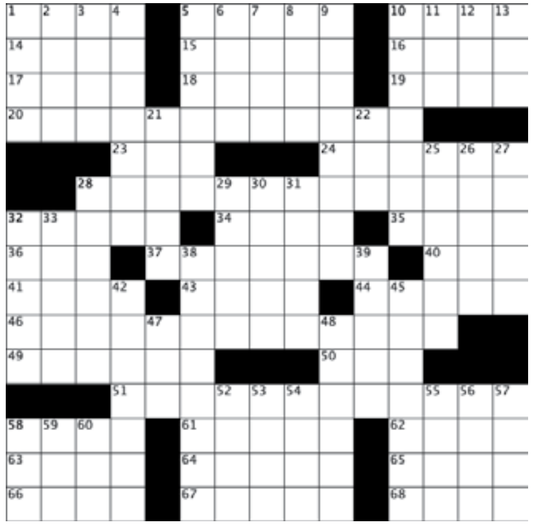
Ancient Wisdom

Tracy Bennett



ACROSS
1. Restrain
5. Out of fashion
10. Bodhrán, in an Irish band
14. State that's home to the "Troll Hole Museum"
15. Artfully dodge
16. Luxurious lifestyle
17. Humdinger
18. Artifact of another time
19. Showed wear and tear
20. Moral: "Those who would mend others, should first mend themselves"
23. Longtime news inits.
24. Yellow-rinded muskmelon
28. Moral: "It is one thing to say that something should be done, but quite a different matter to do it"
32. Port-au-Prince's land
34. Sympathetic anagram of 35-Across
35. Hell's half ___
36. Every bit
37. Helpful inserts for pointy shoes
40. The time of one's life, maybe
41. Eponymously massage
43. Bake sale array
44. Air force trainee
46. Moral: "Might makes right"
49. Pan's group, in myth
50. Tree that's a gateway to the Underworld, in Celtic lore
51. Source of this puzzle's morality tales
58. "What a relief!"
61. Wolf pack member of W.W. II
62. Mother's sister, e.g.
63. Guatemalan greeting
64. Creator of Winnie-the-Pooh (and Tigger too)
65. Zip
66. Go against
67. Medieval knight's "trusty" transport
68. Fairy ___ (magical sprinkles)

DOWN
1. Stable youngster
2. "No way"
3. Poke to provoke, as a bear
4. Bunch caught at a reception
5. Get way off track
6. French "with"
7. What animals can do, in folk tales
8. Correct a narrative, say
9. Poured into cups
10. Salt lake bordering Jordan
11. Many a Scott Joplin tune
12. Application
13. Rx prescription
21. Illuminated from below
22. "What a relief ..."
25. Consent (to)
26. Ballet studio fixture
27. Really irked
28. Soldier's lodging
29. Make housebound by winter weather
30. Where necklace clasps rest
31. Wildebeest's main diet
32. Stags
33. Polynesian greeting
38. Pogo and others, in comics
39. Milan's opera house La ___
42. "Peter Pan" song about taking off for Neverland
45. Item worn by a soccer team's captain
47. Wrath
48. Lifted, as a heavy weight
52. "In memoriam" piece
53. May festival fixture
54. Able to think clearly
55. Kalua Pua'a feast
56. Conclusions
57. Walks or runs, e.g.
58. Third degree, for some?
59. Home gardening tool
60. Magical creature of Celtic lore

The great gig of life

PEDRO CAMPOS
Groundcover vendor No. 652

Doing gigs wasn't new for me when I was 16 and started making some money. I'm the oldest of five, and I've always helped my parents raise the little ones — not just babysitting, but also teaching them. Especially math. I was always helping with their homework since both my parents worked. Soon enough, I was also helping their friends, sharing what I knew. I managed to keep my grades at school.

When I was 18, I came to Michigan as an exchange student and landed in Fenton. As a citizen there, my first official job was at Taco Bell as a "stuffer" — that was in 1995. Later, I worked for a couple of weeks as a landscaper, still in Fenton, before going back to Brazil.

Back in Brazil, I did all kinds of gigs. I taught a variety of subjects — math, physics, chemistry, drawing, Portuguese, English, even chess. I was only 20 when I started writing poems professionally, publishing them in a magazine in São Paulo. From there, I moved on to writing articles, and soon enough I was editing and correcting every piece that went into the magazine. I participated in marketing campaigns, translated from English and Spanish to Portuguese, and did tons of street-level data collection as a field researcher. That job carried me through college.

I got into the University of São Paulo when I was 19. I passed the entrance exam and earned a full scholarship. Still, I didn't know exactly what to study at first, so I started out in engineering for two years before deciding to switch to social sciences. That degree included anthropology, sociology and political science. I also took courses in statistics, economics, geography and history. One thing I learned from engineering is to be curious and proactive in my self-learning process — so I kept going, enrolling in psychology and philosophy classes too. I took full advantage of attending such a great school as USP, sitting in on classes across more than 30 departments, mixing undergrad and postgrad courses whenever I could.

My first job after starting university was as a tech support assistant, helping people navigate university systems and access resources for their own businesses. After that, I had a gig conducting socio-economic surveys for the Ayrton Senna Project — an initiative to keep teens off the streets through sports and education. As a sociologist, I've had experience at all levels of scientific research — from data collection to analysis. I've had the privilege of participating in a few government studies, too.

I also worked with a magazine called Revista Metropoli, which led us to create a nonprofit called Voice Institute (Ivoz). We worked directly with the community, using their cultural expressions — graffiti, rap, dance — to create visibility and sustainable businesses for them. It was about helping people make a living by doing what they love.

Along the way, I've done restaurant work too — cooking, cleaning and serving tables by the beach and also in the city of São Paulo. I helped my dad with all sorts of odd jobs, doing some of his accounting, running little errands, but my favorites were anything involving carpentry or general construction work.

Living on my own for many years taught me that there are no demeaning jobs. You do what you have to do. If you walk on the floor, you better sweep it. If you use the bathroom, same deal. If the washing machine breaks, you figure out how to fix it. I always say: "The bed you lie in is the one you made." First, get the job done. Then, think about making a living. Once that's handled, you can enjoy a little quality time — or maybe work on your next project.

When you work for money, you're selling the most precious moments of your life. Work is a cycle. Whatever you're doing now probably needs doing again soon. I take it as a mature thing to recognize your place in society — you should be useful in some way, help your community, and not only do what you're paid for. In this context, there are no demeaning jobs. You gotta do what you gotta do. The things you do not for direct profit show who you really are, what your intentions are and what you're capable of.

Today, I keep looking for good gigs that will challenge me mentally and physically, as I do my work as a Groundcover News vendor and also as a writer. One of my favorite songs is "The Great Gig in the Sky" by Pink Floyd. That title says it all. Life's one big gig — you just have to play in tune.

"And I am not frightened of dying, you know
Any time will do, I don't mind
Why should I be frightened of dying?
There's no reason for it
You've gotta go sometime"
— Pink Floyd, The Great Gig in the Sky

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➡ **RESEARCH** from page 12

businesses going. Some of them are barely getting by so it's great to see people have a little money to invest in their own business. There is a lot of love in Ann Arbor, it's a beautiful place to live. I was pleasantly surprised that people talk about their city as much as they do in a study about income.

GCN: Why do you research this topic out of all the potential programs to improve quality of life outcomes?

WL: I think guaranteed income programs are great because they take away all of the bureaucracy and red tape and wasted time that applicants can find frustrating and dehumanizing. It allows you to spend money on what is best for you and that shows trust in the applicants.

GCN: Why is it important to popularize these findings through Groundcover, events, etc.? What is the potential impact?

WL: Because we want to share how powerful guaranteed income programs can be so that more people support them and more cities adopt them.

GCN: What stigma do you observe surrounding cash assistance?

WL: There is often a stigma that people don't work very hard or put effort into finding jobs or use that cash assistance on things that are unhealthy.

After taking a closer look at the research process, we learned how important autonomy and dignity are to the investigation team. The undertone seems to be "these people are adults and can solve their own problems if given the right support." Some might say GIG A2 is just throwing money at a problem, but the team sees something else. They see the integrity and industry of the entrepreneurs of the gig economy.

The team seems hopeful that a future with guaranteed income will have a positive impact on Ann Arbor. What will that look like? Fewer evictions? Less food insecurity? Will it truly give small business owners and gig workers an advantage? The project is still going on, so the jury is still out. The investigators seem confident there will be an improvement in the quality of life for the recipients.

Working food delivery service sucks!

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

In 1995, the first restaurant delivery service started in the United States. "Worldwide Waiter" was the first delivery service and is still in operation today as Waiter.com. These days, the top three restaurant delivery services are DoorDash, Grubhub and Uber Eats, which together account for 80% of the sector's revenue.

In the United States, DoorDash dominates the online food delivery market, earning the most revenue with a market share of 67% as of March 2024, followed by UberEats at 23%. Grubhub was a pioneer in the food delivery space, but its market share has been challenged by the competitors. Instacart, which primarily focuses on grocery delivery, is growing rapidly.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as people "sheltered in place," restaurant delivery services saw their sales reach new heights. The reality is that many people are too lazy to prepare their own food or shop for their own food, so although the number of individual sales have slowed down, spending remains higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Let's focus on the gig workers: Instacart is often cited as having the best initial compensation, with drivers earning around $30 per hour; DoorDash average weekly payout is $240; Uber Eats is popular for its broad reach and flexible schedule but the weekly average payout is only $140.

These food delivery services have millions of drivers across the country, with DoorDash having over seven million active drivers.

Last year I decided to give food delivery a try to see if I could make some money. I purchased an electric bike and signed up with both DoorDash and Uber Eats as a bike delivery carrier, and a year later, I got myself a car and became a delivery driver.

All these services have their own set of rules, and one of DoorDash's policies is to not decline more than a certain percentage of orders or you can be terminated from their platform. In contrast, on Uber Eats, one can decline as many orders as he or she pleases. DoorDash requires its drivers to schedule work time unless it's really busy, whereas with UberEats you can sign in and work at any time of the day or night. One of the many things I don't like about DoorDash is that their app doesn't show the final destination for deliveries. Uber Eats, however, shows the cross-streets or neighborhood of the final food delivery destination. For example, I got an order from Barry's Bagels on Stadium and I didn't look at where it was being delivered to, which turned out to be Brighton. I wouldn't have accepted it if I'd known.

I did a few food deliveries for DoorDash, but decided to just use Uber Eats instead. Note: some drivers use DoorDash, UberEats, and Instacart all at the same time. And drivers on the UberEats platform can do rideshare with Uber Rideshare too.

The significant downsides of restaurant food delivery services are:

- The average pay is around $2-$10 per delivery plus tips;
- Finding parking in the downtown area;
- Gas prices;
- The wear and tear on your car which goes uncompensated;
- When the app offers you additional orders while on an active order;
- Waiting in long drive-through lines for pickups;
- When something goes wrong and you have to try to get in touch with support;
- When the restaurant gets the order wrong;
- Customers who don't tip.

Please take heed: corporate entities are out to make a profit, so we have to start looking out for one another. If you receive a good timely service from your delivery person, you should look out for your fellow man or woman because DoorDash, Uber Eats, and Instacart are not going to do it. Leave a tip!!!

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OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Lemon garlic salad

JUNE MILLER
U-M student contributor

Lemon garlic dressing*:
⅓ cup olive oil
⅓ cup water
⅓ cup lemon juice
2 cloves garlic (finely chopped)
¼ tsp. salt (to taste)
⅛ tsp. pepper
2 tsp. Italian Seasoning
½ tsp. ground sumac

Salad ingredients:
1 bunch/head of leafy greens of your choice
2 large carrots
1 cucumber
1 bell pepper
2 handfuls sugar snap peas
½ cup nuts or seeds of your choice
1 rotisserie chicken or alternate meat

Directions:

Dump all of the dressing ingredients into your jar. Put the lid on, and shake vigorously.

Chop your greens to a desirable size and toss them into your bowl. Chop the carrots, cucumber, bell pepper and sugar snap peas. Chopping each vegetable differently adds variation making the meal more enjoyable to make and eat. I often slice the carrots into strips, chop the cucumbers into triangles, and dice the pepper and pea pods.

Add the vegetables and the nuts or seeds to the bowl of greens and toss. Pull apart the rotisserie chicken and add it too.

None of the ingredients are essential to the recipe so if you can't find an ingredient, hate one, or love a different one, replace it or leave it out and you'll still get an exceptional salad.

**The dressing is also great for drizzling over pizza and marinating meat.*

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6	1	3	7	2	5	9	8	4
2	7	5	8	9	4	6	3	1
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